

EVALUATION OF THE COMMON READING EXPERIENCE PROGRAM FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

Prepared for:
Bowling Green State University
April, 2003

Prepared by:
Alan G. Walker, M.A.
Julie A. Fuller, M.A.

Supervised by:
Milton D. Hakel, Ph.D.



Institute for Psychological Research and Application
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Executive Summary

This report presents the results of an evaluation of the Common Reading Experience program which was piloted in Fall 2001 and implemented again during Fall semester, 2002. Student reactions to the program were evaluated each year via a 22-item Student Discussion Questionnaire. Additionally, student's Grade Point Averages were merged into the data sets to evaluate this key university outcome. Specifically, the report contains a summary of: (1) the initial results from the 2001 pilot evaluation, (2) results from the current year, and, (3) a longitudinal evaluation examining whether favorable outcomes found for pilot program participants first-semester Grade Point Averages continued to be observed over subsequent semesters as compared to those students who were not involved in the program.

Overview of 2001 Pilot Results:

- Students involved in the pilot expressed significantly more favorable responses to two survey items
 - I would like to learn more about protecting the environment
 - I would like to learn more about personality, political, and/or social values
- Additionally, it was found that those participating in the program had, on average, more favorable first-semester GPA's, an observation that aroused interest in evaluating whether this initial finding would continue to be observed during subsequent semesters.

Overview of 2002 Results:

- Students involved in the 2002 program expressed significantly different responses to six items
- However, results revealed that students involved with the program responded significantly *less* favorably to five of these items than those who were not involved with the program
- The single item that was statistically significant in the expected direction (i.e., students involved with the program responding more favorably) was "I have attended out-of-class events at BGSU such as listening to prominent speakers."
- However, differences on this item may be explained by the on-campus visit of Cedric Jennings (on whose life *A Hope in the Unseen* was based)
- In contrast to 2001 findings, a comparison of student GPAs between those involved and not involved with the program revealed no significant differences in 2002

Overview of Longitudinal Evaluation

- An evaluation of student GPAs revealed that while students involved with the program continued to enjoy higher GPAs, this difference cannot be attributed to involvement with the program, but rather must, at present, be attributed to currently unknown and unmeasured factors.
- No significant differences were found between those involved and not involved in the program in terms of total earned credit hours
- Students were no more likely to remain at BGSU as a result of participating in the program.

Background

Bowling Green State University initiated the Common Reading Experience with a pilot project in Fall semester, 2001. Approximately 800 students participated in the pilot project, and a subsequent evaluation suggested that the project was well-received by both students and faculty. In Fall 2002, the project was implemented for the second time. This project involved providing a sample of about 2000 first-year students a common book to read over the summer (i.e., prior to beginning their first semester at BGSU) or in the beginning of the Fall 2002 semester. The book chosen for the 2002 program was *A Hope in the Unseen* by Ron Suskind. The primary goals of the Common Reading Experience project are to provide a common point of discussion for students, to establish academics as a priority at BGSU, and to assist the college socialization process by making out-of-class learning more than just social experiences for first-year students. For the second BGSU Common Reading Experience project, selected instructors and professors in English, UNIV 100, BG Experience (BGX), Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS 107), College Student Personnel (CSP), Honors classes, and the Upward Bound program agreed to use the book as a discussion point in their respective classes.

In addition to being used in classroom discussions, another major objective of the program is to unite divergent disciplines in discussing and addressing common goals such as increasing interaction between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Indeed, two of the Learning Outcomes recently adopted by the university are “Connections” and “Participation.” As stated in the University Learning Outcomes, “Connecting is the essence of creative problem solving, shown in synthesizing knowledge within and across courses, integrating theory and practice, linking academic and life experiences, and relating one's self and culture to diverse cultures within the U.S. and globally” and “Participating is a matter of active engagement, rather than passive observation, and is shown through working effectively in diverse groups and teams, as well as through cooperation and respect for others.” Ultimately, putting a sense of community into BGSU by seeking to bridge gaps and open discussions among divergent colleges, programs, and departments and also seeking to assist students in “making connections” among their various courses and participating in activities outside of their coursework is the overarching goal of the Common Reading Experience project.

Objective

The Institute for Psychological Research and Application (IPRA) at Bowling Green State University evaluated the Common Reading Experience pilot project conducted in Fall 2001, and was contacted to evaluate the program the second time it was implemented, in Fall 2002. Specifically, the effectiveness of using *A Hope in the Unseen* in generating class discussion, facilitating socialization, assisting students in making “connections,” and intellectual stimulation was evaluated via a brief multiple-choice student outcomes survey (see Appendix A). Concurrently, the student outcomes survey was also administered to a matched sample of English students who were not involved in the Common Reading Experience (i.e., who did not read the book). This enabled us to: (1) evaluate responses for those involved in the program and (2) to compare results between the two groups for significant differences in response patterns.

Survey Development

In September of 2001, interviews were conducted with the instructors involved in the Common Reading Experience pilot program. The purpose of the interviews was to gain more information about the project, including: (1) the personal and overall project objectives of the instructors, (2) how the book read for the pilot program (*Into the Forest* by Jean Hegland) would be used in the context of the class being taught by each instructor, and (3) the potential positive outcomes for students involved with the Common Reading Experience program. (Some of the information obtained from the interviews is included in the Background and Objective sections above.)

Responses to the interviews were used to generate items for the multiple-choice student outcomes survey (e.g., “I enjoy reading beyond what is required in the classroom”). The survey was designed to assess the positive intellectual outcomes of the students involved in the 2001 pilot program (i.e., those who read *Into the Forest*) in comparison with a matched sample of students not involved in the program (i.e., those who did not read the book). A revised version of the original student outcomes survey was used to evaluate the program in Fall, 2002. Although items on the student outcomes survey were not linked explicitly to the book, two of the original survey items relating to environmental awareness (major theme of the 2001 book) were replaced with items relating to cultural differences (which was a major theme of the 2002 book; i.e., “I would enjoy more interaction with individuals whose cultural backgrounds differ from mine” and “I would enjoy learning more about the experiences of individuals who come from upbringings different from my own;” the final two items on the survey). See Appendix A for a copy of the 2002 survey.

Survey Administration

Arrangements were made with individual instructors to administer the survey during regularly scheduled class times. Completed surveys were then sent to IPRA for data entry and analyses.

Overview of 2001 Results

Overall, student reactions to the 2001 pilot program were quite positive. Nearly 80% of students involved in the program indicated that they would recommend a similar Common Reading Experience for the following year’s incoming students. Additionally, those involved in the pilot program expressed significantly more favorable responses to two items:

- I would like to learn more about protecting the environment
- I would like to learn more about personality, political, and/or social values

Finally, it was found that those participating in the program had, on average, more favorable GPAs (2.74 vs. 2.56). This finding led to interest in tracking whether this difference would hold up over subsequent semesters and whether or not this difference could be attributed to involvement in the program.

2002 Results

Several different analyses were conducted in order to better understand the 2002 survey results. On a purely descriptive level, Table 1 contains a table which presents percent agreement (students who responded “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree”) to each item; responses are broken down by whether or not students were involved in the Common Reading Experience (Table 1) and also by class (Table 2).

In order to identify significant differences in student responses, independent samples t-tests were conducted for each survey item. We compared the English 110 and 111 sample (which read the book) to the matched sample (which did not read the book, but was also comprised of English 110 and 111 students) because examining only the English classes offered the purest evaluation of significant differences. Results of the t-tests revealed significant differences in responses for the two groups (book and no book) for items 4, 10, 16, 17, 18, and 19:

- I find it hard to formulate good questions (4)
- I enjoy reading beyond what is required in the classroom (10)
- I have attended out-of-class events at BGSU such as listening to prominent speakers (16)
- I follow current events on a regular basis (17)
- I would like to write and publish a book someday (18)
- I would like to learn more about culture and society (19)

These results suggest that English students involved in the Common Reading Experience responded differently to these items. More specifically, students in English 110 and 111 who participated in the book project responded significantly *less* favorably to all items except item 16 than did the matched sample who did not read the book. For example, English students who participated in the Common Reading Experience project reported that they find reading beyond what is required in the classroom *less* enjoyable than those who did not read the book (see Table 1). It is of note that when comparing *all* students who participated in the Common Reading Experience and completed the survey (i.e., English classes in addition to UNIV and HDFS) to the English students who did not read the book, there was a significant difference between responses of the two groups for only two items, item 16 (above) and item 15, “I am involved with campus activities outside of class.”

Follow-up hierarchical regression analyses were run to examine whether the significant differences in responses to the six items above between the English “book” and English “no book” groups remained after controlling for class, ACT, GPA, and demographic differences (race, sex, and age). The follow-up analyses revealed that after controlling for the additional variables, there was a significant difference in English student responses between the book and no book groups only for *item 16*, “I have attended out-of-class events at BGSU such as listening to prominent speakers.” One possible explanation for this result could be that students who were involved in the Common Reading Experience attended events relating to the Cedric Jennings (on whom *A Hope in the Unseen* was based) campus visit, and students who did not read the book may not have attended any out-of-class events during the Fall semester.

Because mean differences were found in student GPAs between those involved and not involved with the program in 2001, this outcome was again evaluated in 2002. If this finding were to be

Table 1
BGSU Student Discussion Questionnaire
% Agreement
(Strongly or Somewhat agree)

	Read Book – All (n = 902)	Read Book - Eng. Only (n = 204)	Did not read book¹ (n = 150)
1. I find it easy to start conversations.....	71.8	73.0	68.0
2. I like to get involved in group discussions.....	55.9	50.9	72.7
3. I enjoy asking questions.....	40.0	33.8	36.7
4. I find it hard to formulate good questions.....	24.7	27.9	21.3
5. I usually wait for others to ask my question rather than to ask it myself.....	36.9	36.3	32.7
6. I take active roles in classroom discussions.....	42.4	39.7	40.7
7. I enjoy discussing things I've learned in class with others outside of the classroom.....	53.5	47.1	48.0
8. Classroom discussions make me think about things I had not thought about before.....	69.1	58.9	69.3
9. Classroom discussions help me to understand and appreciate different viewpoints.....	73.8	65.2	70.0
10. I enjoy reading beyond what is required in the classroom.....	17.2	11.3	23.3
11. I feel comfortable approaching faculty members to discuss ideas.....	52.5	53.4	50.6
12. I like presenting my ideas in a public forum.....	21.0	22.0	18.0
13. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.....	33.3	28.0	32.0
14. I find it difficult to talk about vague topics such as values.....	20.4	20.6	16.0
15. I am involved with campus activities outside of class.....	45.1	37.2	36.0
16. I have attended out-of-class events at BGSU such as listening to prominent speakers *	59.1	50.0	37.3
17. I follow current events on a regular basis.....	43.8	34.3	46.0
18. I would like to write and publish a book someday.....	15.4	11.2	16.7
19. I would like to learn more about culture and society.....	46.9	32.3	46.0
20. I would like to learn more about personality, political, and/or social values.....	45.6	34.3	40.6
21. I would enjoy more interaction with individuals whose cultural backgrounds differ from mine.....	54.8	43.6	54.0
22. I would enjoy learning more about the experiences of individuals who come from upbringings different from my own.....	54.8	51.5	54.7

¹ All students who did not read the book and took the survey were enrolled in English 110 or English 111.

*After controlling for class, ACT, GPA, and demographic differences (race, sex, and age), only this item revealed significantly different responses between those who did and did not read the book.

Table 2
BGSU Student Discussion Questionnaire
% Agreement by Group
(Strongly or Somewhat agree)

	Read the Book				No book
	English 110 n = 173	English 111 n = 31	UNIV 100 n = 595	HDF A n = 103	English 110-111 n = 150
1. I find it easy to start conversations	72.8	74.2	73.3	73.3	68.0
2. I like to get involved in group discussions	50.9	51.6	60.7	60.7	72.7
3. I enjoy asking questions	35.3	25.8	44.4	44.4	36.7
4. I find it hard to formulate good questions	28.9	22.6	24.2	21.4	21.3
5. I usually wait for others to ask my question rather than to ask it myself	35.8	38.7	35.6	45.6	32.7
6. I take active roles in classroom discussions	39.9	38.7	45.0	45.0	40.7
7. I enjoy discussing things I've learned in class with others outside of the classroom	46.2	51.6	55.1	55.1	48.0
8. Classroom discussions make me think about things that I had not thought about before	59.5	54.8	71.8	71.8	69.3
9. Classroom discussions help me to understand and appreciate different viewpoints	65.3	64.5	76.8	76.8	70.0
10. I enjoy reading beyond what is required in the classroom	12.1	6.5	19.8	19.8	23.3
11. I feel comfortable approaching faculty members to discuss ideas	52.6	58.1	53.9	53.9	50.6
12. I like presenting my ideas in a public forum	23.7	12.9	21.5	21.5	18.0
13. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence	28.9	22.6	35.3	35.3	32.0
14. I find it difficult to talk about vague topics such as values	20.8	19.4	20.2	21.4	16.0
15. I am involved with campus activities outside of class	37.6	35.5	46.9	46.9	36.0
16. I have attended out-of-class events at BGSU such as listening to prominent speakers	48.6	58.1	61.5	61.5	37.3
17. I follow current events on a regular basis	33.5	38.7	46.4	46.4	46.0
18. I would like to write and publish a book someday	10.4	16.1	16.8	16.8	16.7
19. I would like to learn more about culture and society	32.4	32.3	49.7	49.7	46.0
20. I would like to learn more about personality, political, and/or social values	34.7	32.3	48.6	48.6	40.6
21. I would enjoy more interaction with individuals whose cultural backgrounds differ from mine	43.9	41.9	58.2	58.2	54.0
22. I would enjoy learning more about the experiences of individuals who come from upbringings different from my own	50.9	54.8	54.6	54.6	54.7

replicated for this year’s Common Reading Experience participants, it would lend some evidence to the notion that last year’s finding was indeed related to involvement in the program and was not due to sampling error. The results of the comparison of available student GPAs for 2002, however, revealed no significant differences in GPA between those who did and did not read the book. As Table 3 reveals, there were significant differences in GPA when comparing averages broken down by group/class:

Table 3
Average GPAs for Students Broken Down by Group

Group	Sample Size*	GPA
English 110 - No book	12	2.46
English 111 - No book	37	2.56
English 110 - Read book	75	2.26
English 111 - Read book	24	2.58
UNIV 100 - Read book	367	2.86
HDFS 107 - Read book	70	2.73

*GPA was only accessible for students who reported their BGSU identification number on the outcomes survey

Longitudinal Analyses

In addition to evaluating the student opinion questionnaire for the current year (i.e., 2002), an effort was undertaken to evaluate if the positive findings in terms of more favorable GPAs for those students involved in the Common Reading Experience last year (i.e., those in the 2001 pilot project, who read *Into the Forest*) would “hold up” over time (i.e., the following year). Further, data were collected for student retention and earned credit hours. This allowed an investigation of whether (a) students involved with the pilot program last year were more likely to remain students at BGSU and (b) there were significant differences in earned credit hours for those who were and were not involved in the pilot program.

Table 4 presents the data that were collected for GPA. The first row represents the findings from last year that generated a good deal of interest in tracking GPA over time. As the table illustrates, pilot project students who read the book continued to have better GPAs in Spring 2001 and Fall 2002. However, independent samples t-tests revealed that none of the differences reached statistical significance. A more statistically rigorous hierarchical regression analysis (which controlled for initial, 2001 GPA, thereby placing all students on statistically “equal-footing”) revealed that participating in the Common Reading Experience had virtually no relationship with student GPA. These results strongly suggest that the initial finding that students read the book had more favorable GPAs was not related to the Common Reading Experience pilot project, but rather would best be attributed to another currently unknown and unmeasured factor.

Table 4
Average GPAs for Pilot Project Students and Matched Sample

Semester	Pilot (Book)	Matched (No book)
Fall 2001	2.74	2.56
Spring 2002	3.03	2.71
Fall 2002	3.00	2.76

Table 5 presents the findings for differences in total earned credit hours broken down by whether or not students participated in the pilot project. As the table reveals, there was very little difference between the two groups. This was statistically supported by independent samples t-tests which revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in terms of this outcome.

Table 5
Average Earned Credit Hours for Pilot Project Students and Matched Sample

Semester	Pilot (Book)	Matched (No book)
Fall 2001	14.56	13.54
Spring 2002	28.82	27.82
Fall 2002	43.81	42.54

Table 6 presents the results for the comparison for student retention. As the table illustrates, by Spring 2003 retention was virtually identical for pilot group and the matched sample. A logistic regression analysis of these data revealed that there was no relationship between student retention and participation in the Common Reading Experience pilot project.

Table 6
Retention Rates for Pilot Project Students and Matched Sample

Semester	Stayed	Left
Spring '02		
Pilot (Book)	91%	9%
Matched (No book)	93%	7%
Fall '02		
Pilot (Book)	73%	27%
Matched (No book)	83%	17%
Spring '03		
Pilot (Book)	73%	27%
Matched (No book)	74%	26%

In summary, the results of these analyses utilizing three important university outcomes revealed no statistically significant differences over the course of one academic year in terms of students' GPAs, Earned Credit Hours, or Student Retention. The initial finding last year of more favorable student GPAs cannot be attributed to use of the book. Further, use of the book had no impact on earned Credit Hours or Student retention accumulated over an academic year.

Conclusions

While program participants responded more favorably to two of twenty-two items in the initial 2001 pilot evaluation, this was not the case with the 2002 data. In fact, five of the six significant differences in item responses between program participants and non-participants revealed significantly *less* favorable responses for program participants (i.e., who read the book) enrolled in English 110 and 111 classes. The only favorable outcome found for one item (“I have attended out-of-class events at BGSU such as listening to prominent speakers”) can be explained by Cedric Jennings’s visit and possible compulsory attendance to this event for program participants. Further, the favorable outcome of program participants enjoying higher first-semester GPAs in 2002 was not found in 2002. Finally, no positive effects of program participation were found in terms of total earned credit hours or student retention.

Several potential explanations for the less favorable outcomes found in 2002 when compared with the 2001 results merit discussion. First, it does not appear that English instructors utilized the book less rigorously in 2001 than in 2002. In fact, based on post-analyses discussions, instructors utilized the book *more* rigorously in 2002 than in 2001 by incorporating the book into theme papers, class discussions, and reading journals. Post-analyses discussions also revealed that instructor attitudes about utilizing the book last year were generally favorable and that instructor attitudes were similarly positive going into the present year. Further, it does not appear that students were less interested or engaged in this year’s book vs. last year’s book.

Post-analyses discussions were less clear concerning the effect of a more involved visit with the author of last year’s book compared to the visit of Cedric Jennings this year. In 2001, Jean Hegland, author of the book chosen for last year made an all-day visit to BGSU and made appearances in many individual class rooms where the book was utilized. She also conducted a plenary question and answer session with students who utilized the book in their classes. In addition, an interdisciplinary panel discussion was held on campus discussing the major theme of last years book (i.e., the environment). It is possible that these additional events made the issues addressed in last years book more salient to students.

Finally, post-analyses discussions revealed that there may be different classroom dynamics between English 110 and 111 and UNIV 100. For example, while nearly all students receive A’s for UNIV 100, approximately twenty percent of students taking English 110 and 111 do not earn passing grades. Thus, while students in UNIV 100 generally read the book “for fun,” students in English 110 and 111 were graded on theme papers and other activities centered around the book. Thus, earning a poor score on a paper based on the book could have a detrimental overall affect on student attitudes. Indeed, analyses revealed that students in English 110 and 111 who read the book had significantly less favorable attitudes on twelve of the twenty-two items than did students in UNIV 100 who also read the book. Further supporting this potential explanation are the results of analyses which revealed that UNIV 100 students who read the book had significantly more favorable attitudes on three items than did English 110 and 111 students who did not read the book:

- I enjoy asking questions
- I have attended out-of-class events at BGSU such as listening to prominent speakers

- I follow current events on a regular basis

However, it should be kept in mind that, as previously mentioned, the purest evaluation comes from the comparison of English 110 and 111 students who read the book with the matched sample of English 110 and 111 who did not read the book. Thus, while it may be true that the dynamics of UNIV 100 and English 110 and 111 may be different, it is also true that student demographic composition or other unmeasured variables between these classes may be driving the observed difference in these three items. Comparing English 110 and 111 who did and did not read the book functions to hold these potentially confounding variables constant.

It should also be noted that the evaluation of the 2001 Common Reading Experience pilot project included an open-ended opinion questionnaire that asked students directly about *Into the Forest*, what benefits they gained from reading the book, what events they attended when the author visited BGSU, whether they would recommend the Common Reading Experience to other students, and what book they would select. This opinion survey revealed that on the whole, students responded quite positively to the pilot project. In fact, 79% of respondents recommended a common reading experience for first-year students in 2002. Common themes in the open-ended responses are highlighted below (a full summary of responses is included in Appendix B).

How students felt about *Into the Forest*

- It helped them to learn about others' views and survival.
- It made them feel fortunate and appreciate the resources available to them; many mentioned that they would no longer take technology for granted.
- Negative feedback related to the sexual scenes in the book and the notion that the book was hard to follow or confusing.

How students felt about the common reading experience

- It forced them to read, exposed them to others' values, and motivated them over the summer.
- It allowed them to meet other first-year students, acting as an "icebreaker" and "bonding experience," giving them things to discuss outside of class.
- Negative comments suggested that the common reading experience had no direct relation to classes and seemed unnecessary.

Students felt positive about meeting author, Jean Hegland

- Comments were mostly positive, suggesting that it helped to clarify points in the book, understand the author's perspective, and learn more about her background.
- They thought it was an interesting experience to meet the author of a book they had actually read.
- A few commented that it was boring or that she was not a great speaker.

An opinion survey was not administered as part of the 2002 assessment, and therefore actual student reactions to the project could not be assessed. Therefore, the results of the 2002 evaluation should be interpreted with caution, as the items on the student outcomes survey were not directly linked to participation in the Common Reading Experience, and responses are likely due to other factors such as specific class or demographics (recall that hierarchical regression

analyses controlling for such factors revealed significant differences between groups for item 16 only).

Recommendations

In order to evaluate the potential explanations offered above for the less-than-favorable evaluation (in the case of English 110 and 111 students) or neutral evaluation (in the case of UNIV and HDFS students) of the program, it is recommended that focus groups be conducted with both students and individual instructors involved with the program. Student focus groups could help to “flesh out” whether or not the student outcomes survey findings were related to the Common Reading Experience or to other factors (e.g., specific class). Along a similar vein, instructor focus groups help to gain a better understanding of instructors’ attitudes and experiences in utilizing the book within the classroom. It is possible that instructors, particularly those in English 110 and 111, are facing obstacles or challenges in utilizing the book that are not currently apparent. Data collected during focus groups could greatly provide additional information that could prove helpful in the design and implementation of future Common Reading Experience initiatives.

Appendix A
Student Outcomes Survey
(Multiple-choice)

Appendix B

Student Opinion Survey: Summary of Responses

ITF Project: Open-ended Questionnaire Responses

What did you like best about ITF?

Common responses: made me think about what I have, easy read, I can relate since the events of Sept 11, the setting, the second half of the book, meeting the author, survival lessons, thinking about the future, the sisters' relationship, better than a textbook, realistic, the plot, interesting

Some direct quotes:

"The way the girls survived against the odds."

"I loved the fact that it raised future problems with our society."

"The openness and the ability I had as a reader to get inside the characters' lives."

"Depicts accurately the consequence of social failure."

"Many parallels with today's society."

"The fact that while it was fiction, it was frighteningly believable."

"How the girls learned to live without the luxuries they once had."

"God was a woman."

"I thought it was very descriptive and it made me realize how good I have it."

"I didn't like the book."

What did you like least about ITF?

Common responses: the incest between the sisters, confusing how the author jumped around in time, too many details/ hard to follow, the ending, boring, disgusting, gruesome details, extra work, unorthodox scenes, the sisters complaining

Some direct quotes:

"Reading in the summer!"

"The incest, it was completely un-needed!"

"Hegland did a terribly bad job with the plot. Jumped from one idea to the next..."

"It took a while to get to the main points."

"It created a lot of extra work that didn't count towards this course."

"I didn't like the whole Eva and Nell 'making love' thing...I have 3 sisters and we've never bonded like that."

"I thought it was boring and hard to get into."

"I was confused at the beginning of the book."

"It was written for women."

"Reading."

What benefits did you gain from reading and discussing ITF?

Common responses: learning others' views, appreciating what I have, learning about different issues, learn about survival, reflection on self and resources, meeting the author, makes me feel fortunate, thinking about the future, taking technology for granted

Some direct quotes:

"I actually realized not all books are boring."

"What we view as important everyday need may not be necessary to survival."

"I learned to appreciate how much time goes into writing and publishing a book."

"I have a greater appreciation for what is going on around me."

"Nothing too important, although it was a nice introduction to college."

"I learned more about how and why the story was formulated the way it was."

"I enjoyed hearing how others interpreted what I had read."

“I learned what to do if electricity goes out and stuff.”

“Nothing I can think of.”

“About the sisters’ love scene. It is not obscene, but logical.”

“I gained a different perspective; there is always another side of view.”

Which, if any, events did you attend while Jean Hegland was at BGSU?

	Panel Discussion	Public Reading	Lunch or Dinner	In-class Discussion	Total
Chapman	53	59	1	45	79
UNIV	12	22	24	37	47
ENVS	8	7	5	30	35
ENG	8	1	16	58	58
Total	81	89	46	170	219

What benefits did you gain from Jean Hegland’s visit?

Common responses: helped clear up points in book, gave insight to her perspective, interesting to meet an author, learned more about her personal experiences (e.g., she has a lot of land), seeing what she looks like, learned why she became a writer, her beliefs were strongly reflected in the book

Some direct quotes:

“I appreciate the book so much more looking at it from her perspective and just getting to know her reasons and viewpoints on events in the book was awesome.”

“I saw how passionate she was with her work.”

“Jeans’ perspective and passion for writing.”

“I have changed my technology thoughts.”

“I finally shook the hand of a real-life author!”

“She wasn’t a great speaker.”

“Her visit was boring.”

“I got to see the author of the book that made me lose time over the summer.”

Would you recommend a common reading experience for 1st year students next year?

	Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Chapman	51	28	0	79
UNIV	44	2	1	47
ENVS	33	1	1	35
ENG	45	10	3	58
Total	173	43	5	219

Why or why not?

Common responses (yes): good to meet the author, enjoyable, fun, socializing, forced me to read, icebreaker for first-year students, something in common to discuss with others, teaches values, motivating, links students and classes, bonding experience for students, helped to meet people

Common responses (no): extra work over the summer, no direct relation to classes, pointless, not taken seriously by many, many failed to read book, seemed unnecessary, overwhelming, no choice, received book too late in summer

Some direct quotes:

“Everyone should read at least one novel in their lifetime.”

“As much as I hate reading, discussions on the book helps a student learn about their fellow students.”

“Some students have never read a book from start to finish.”

“It was a great book.”

“It was just a good book in general, and we got to talk it over with the author.”

“It relates well to first-year experiences.”

“Good way to start college.”

“Good way to start discussions with other students.”

“It helped me to focus on academics during the summer.”

“It is good to read a book.”

“Most kids hating reading and don’t do it so what is the point.”

“No one wants to read over the summer.”

“This was boring and gave me a bad opinion about Chapman in the beginning.”

“It’s not fair to have to read a book to be in this dorm.”

“...we were not given homework about the book or anything like that, so I feel that many people didn’t find it necessary to read the book.”

Please recommend a book for students to read for future CRE projects:**Books (# of recommendations if greater than one):**

Into the Forest (15)

Night by Elie Wiesel (7)

The Catcher in the Rye (5)

Tuesdays with Morrie (5)

The Giver by Lois Lowery (4)

The Scarlet Letter (4)

1984 (3)

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury (3)

Into the Wild (3)

A Lesson Before Dying (2)

Animal Farm (2)

Catch 22 (2)

Lord of the Flies (2)

She’s Come Undone by Wally Lamb (2)

To Kill a Mocking Bird (2)

A Child Called “It”

A Clockwork Orange

A Hope in the Unseen

Agony and the Ecstasy

And Then There Were None

Angela’s Ashes by Frank McCourt

Atonement Child

Breakfast of Champions by Kurt Vonnegut

Casino

Celestine Prophecies

Chicken Soup for the College Soul
David Copperfield
Executive Orders by Tom Clancy
Exodus
Fallen Angel
Faun and Games by Piers Anthony
Flowers in the Attic by V.C. Andrews
For the Love of the Game by Bill Bradley
Fraud
Friday Night Lights
Giovanni's Room by James Baldwin
Harmful Intent by Robin Cook
High Fidelity by Nick Hornby
Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
Huckleberry Finn
I Know this Much is True by Wally Lamb
Interview With the Vampire or Vampire Lestat
Ishamel
Island of the Blue Dolphins
Jurassic Park by Michael Crichton
White Orlander
Left Behind
Moby Dick
Never Cry Wolf
Nicholas Sparks
Odessey 2001
Of Mice and Men
On the Road
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
Planet of the Apes
Rapture of Canaan
Red Badge of Courage
Rudy
Runaway Jury by John Grisham
Slaughterhouse Five
The Bluest Eye
The Cay
The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test by Tom Wolf
The Freedom Writers
The Good Children
The Great Santini
The Inferno by Dante
The Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula LeQuin
The Loop
The Lord of the Rings
The Man and the Sea
The Midwife's Tale
The Most Wanted by Jacqylen Mitchard

The Outsiders

The Tempest

The Things They Carried

Their Eyes Were Watching God

Things Fall Apart

Tom Sawyer (“holds different values now than it did in fourth grade”)

Walden by Thoreau

Where the Red Fern Grows

Who Moved My Cheese

No recommendation:

Blank (83)

? (20)

“I don’t know” or “I don’t read often” (6)

“No book” (3)

N/A (2)

Non-specific recommendations:

Something nonfiction (2)

Some type of mystery novel

Any Cynthia Vogt novel

Tom Clancy Novels

Harry Potter series

A thriller

Some type of book that would appeal to college students’ interests